

in this province, and the giving to the industry a status far in advance of what it has ever heretofore had. The system has worked out with great success on the continent of Europe under conditions less favorable and with fewer opportunities than exist in British Columbia. If successful, too, it will set an example for the whole Dominion of Canada and the continent of America and will solve many of the more serious problems which at the present time confront the farmer, who from the fierce competition waged by the cheap labor of foreign countries has had for a number of years past but a small margin to reward his necessarily laborious efforts.

AID IN OTHER WAYS.

Reference in the foregoing has only been incidentally made to the expenditure incurred by the government from year to year for agricultural purposes, which in all directions, directly and indirectly, has in recent years aggregated 25 or 30 thousand dollars a year, nor has reference been made to the large sums loaned to the farmers of the Fraser Valley in order to assist them in recovering from the disastrous effects of the flooding of the Fraser river in 1894. There is also to consider the very large sums that have been expended and are being expended by the government in connection with the dyking enterprises of the Fraser River Valley for purpose of reclamation and protection of the rich delta lands of the district affected by overflow, the result of which is that about 100,000 acres of the best land of British Columbia will be made available for cultivation in the highest degree, and will render these lands capable of producing a vast amount of wealth in the years to come.

In view of all that has been stated in the foregoing, which merely presents an outline of the policy of agricultural development pursued by the government it cannot be reasonably maintained by the most captious critic that the government has not done all in its power to advance and promote the interests of the farming community.

THE AGRICULTURAL DEPT.

It has also instituted by its agricultural department a bureau of intelligence which has from time to time issued most valuable information not only for the benefit of the farmers in the various districts themselves but for the information of intending settlers. It was for a long time a standing mark against the province that it was necessary to import so large a share of the ordinary necessities of life which could be produced in the province itself, and

that fact has excited much comment both within and outside the province.

By the policy of directing attention to our agricultural resources in a practical way and affording facilities for development, it will not be longer competent for critics to point the finger of scorn at the lack of production in British Columbia, but on the other hand, from being an importing population we will soon take rank as a population capable of exporting its varied products to other provinces and other countries besides adequately supplying the ever increasing demands of home consumption.

AN AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

It is not, however, the intention of the government to stop here, but to extend its operations to new fields and in other directions. The hon. the Premier in his budget speech as Minister of Finance, indicated the policy of the government in respect to other important matters which were having the attention of the government. He referred to the problems of irrigation by which the dry belts of the interior might be made capable of much greater results, and to the subject of cold storage. He pointed out that by establishing adequate cold storage facilities at some convenient point in the interior that great advantages would ensue to the farmers there where cattle raising was a predominant industry. If farmers could sell their cattle in the fall of the year when in good condition, or kill and store the beef so as to be available to supply the coast markets regularly a great saving would be directly effected to the farmers, besides the many other advantages and benefits that would indirectly accrue. Pursuant to what was an announcement of the government's policy provision was made in the supplementary estimates for the appointment of a commission which will have for its object a careful enquiry into the subject of irrigation, cold storage, the mortgage tax and financial difficulties of the farmers and other matters affecting their interests not yet dealt with by the government. An exhaustive report on these subjects may no doubt be anticipated, and undoubtedly it will have the consideration of the government with a view to further legislative enactment.

The subject of the mortgage tax is one which has been prominently before the public for several years, and has had the serious consideration of the government with a view to avoiding the incidence of taxation falling upon the mortgagors as it does at present in many instances. This, however, is surrounded with many difficulties. It may be stated here that mortgages are taxed by every known government and a similar